

BEE MURDER

*by
Kyriaki Onisiforou*

PART 1

What are you really afraid of? Are you afraid of spiders? Are you afraid of darkness? Maybe you're claustrophobic or even better agoraphobic. What's your biggest fear? A few days ago, I heard that there are people who are afraid of Santa Claus! HO HO HO Merry Christmas!!! Anyway, I am afraid of bees. No, in fact I'm terrified of bees. That's my biggest fear of all. Whenever I see a bee, or even hear a buzzing sound, I start trebling, I even find it difficult to breath, I feel a bit dizzy and I sweat like a pig. This may sound ridiculous to you but it's something that really annoys me. In fact, if you allow it, fear can get in your way of enjoying life. Just think of all the times you've said no to a Sunday field trip because you are afraid of insects and especially bees. Think of all the times you stayed home on a Saturday night instead of going out with friends because you were afraid of being rejected. Think of the times you had to take the stairs all the way up to the 8th floor instead of taking the elevator, and think of all the beautiful countries you haven't visited and probably you never will, just because you are afraid of airplanes. Just think about that. Isn't fear really a pain in the butt? It certainly is so!!

For instance, I always avoid walking near trees and bushes and generally wherever I think that there might be bees around. Sometimes I get angry with myself for being so weak and unable to overcome my fears. I know that virtually all bee species are non-aggressive if undisturbed and many cannot sting at all. But I just can't overcome this fear!

PART 2

I have a confession to make...

I've killed three bees until now and I intend to kill many, many more! I'm not a bad person you know, I just hate bees! And believe me, it's not difficult to commit a murder. In fact, it's as simple as killing a bee!

BEE MURDER No 1

I was 5, maybe 6, years old and I was at Kindergarten playing quietly with sand. So I was there, playing, minding my own business when I suddenly grabbed a bee which accidentally fell inside my sand bucket. At first, I didn't see the bee, since it was buried under the sand, but I felt some kind of pain on my left hand. I went crying to my teacher, holding the smashed bee in my hands. There I was, committing my first real bee murder and I made it look like an accident, didn't I?

BEE MURDER No 2

It happened when I was 14 years old. It was summertime and we were having a good time at the beach with my friends. I was sunbathing for quite a while when I felt like going for a swim. So I got up, walking towards the beach. My feet were burning from the hot sand, and before I realized it, I stepped on a bee! I felt this enormous pain under my foot and I said "What the fuck?" And there it was the bee, smashed on my foot and the stinger still inside me. It was terrible; it ruined my whole day because I couldn't walk. But isn't this as simple as taking a step towards

committing a murder in real life? Just watch the news on a daily basis and you will realize that murder nowadays has become as simple as a bee murder.

BEE MURDER No 3

I've told you fear is a pain in the butt! Ok, this is a bit embarrassing...but it's still a murder! It was summertime and my friends and I decided to go camping on the mountains. I was preparing for that trip for a whole week. Besides, the boy I liked was going to be there also. While he was handing me the bread and sausages and we were all sitting around the campfire cooking, suddenly a scream was heard! Guess what? It was me. A bee again! This time I was sitting on it. The sausage I was holding flew 3 meters away in the air! Of course, I couldn't sit for two days because my butt hurt and it had swollen up. "Nice way to go, Kyriaki" I murmured to myself. I'm sure he never forgot about me. The girl with the swollen butt!

PART 3

Another traumatic incident with bees, which I will never forget, cost me a good friendship. I remember that one time, it was in Primary School I think, and I was playing with my friend Mariza. Mariza had black, really curly hair, the curliest hair you've ever seen. So we were playing hide-and-seek near some bushes. Unfortunately we failed to notice that those bushes were full of bees! A minute later, I heard Mariza screaming "There's something in my hair and it's biting me! Kyriaki help, I think it's a bee!!"

A bee? A bee? You can imagine what happened next. I ran away from her, leaving her alone screaming and crying. I know it was terrible leaving her like that but I'm terrified of bees; it's not something I can control. Mariza did not talk to me again after that incident. My phobia cost me a good friend.

Oh, oh listen to this. Last summer, it was Sunday I think, and I went with my parents to a monastery up in the mountains. It's like a paradise up there, very spiritual, very peaceful. There is also a small church inside the monastery, where all the monks pray. I remember that there were many people visiting the monastery on that day, but the church is so small that everyone had to stand outside in the church yard. Who could imagine that a lunatic would run up and down the yard trying to hide from the bees during the whole service? Well, that was me. But it's not my fault; the place was practically full of bees and wasps. It was a nightmare! I felt bees were walking up and down my shoulders; I was constantly hearing a buzzing sound behind me. Everyone was looking at me. I even noticed the monks laughing at me! Of course, on my way out I bought a jar of honey to remind me of this terrifying experience!

PART 4

But how come I'm so afraid of bees? No one else in my family is so afraid of bees.

My father! My father is fearless. He's not afraid of anything! He even grabs insects with his bare hands; he is not afraid of being stung. Moreover, when he was young, he made this disgusting bet with one of his friends. He had to eat a worm, and if he did, he would win 10 pounds. I can't believe he actually ate it! He even told me that it tasted like chicken!

My mother! My mother, on the other hand, constantly engages in ferocious battles with insects. One morning I found her killing a cockroach with a broomstick. She was shouting at the cockroach: "Die, die you little bitch! Get out of my house!"

I can't really remember if anything traumatic had happened when I was young that would cause this kind of fear. What I remember is that when I was young I was not afraid of anything. You know, when we are young we feel that we are immortal, we are not afraid of getting hurt, we are almost fearless. As we grow older, we find out what it feels like to get hurt and we develop, what we call, fears. We are afraid to love, we are afraid of being rejected, we are afraid of the unknown, of getting old, of dying! I think it would be best if we could preserve this sense of immortality, since it wouldn't keep us from completing our dreams. Wait a minute... Should I really be afraid of bees? Let me look at them more closely. Although I am afraid of bees, nevertheless I envy their social nature. They have created their perfect social community in contradiction to humans. Why can't we be more like bees? There are times when I honestly believe that humans are the wildest animals God has created, I've never seen bees killing each other but I have seen people brutally murdering other people. When I was 12, I witnessed two murder incidents taking place in Cyprus, the country where I live. Tasos Isaac and Solomos Solomou, 2 Greek-Cypriot refugees were brutally murdered. Isaac was beaten to death by a Turkish mob in the UN buffer zone and Solomou was shot three times, in the mouth, the neck and the stomach. This is the proof that humans can easily become the wildest, most dangerous animals on earth. After all we are supposed to be the most intelligent beings on earth.

Are we really?

Honeybees are social insects, living together in highly organized colonies. Each member has a specific job to do: They manufacture their own products, they have a security system, good living conditions, apartments, offices, streets, and everybody employed seems to be going about feeling happy. They don't go to work each day wondering whether this would be the day they will get fired, but we do. They work to live, we live to work. Our entertainment is a boom box called TV; we even make friends through Facebook because we are unable to create relationships in real life. We are officially unable to communicate. Bees communicate through a dance ritual. It's as simple as that. A bee dance. Since they do it, why can't we?

At the end of the day, it's not bees I should be afraid of but humans. Bees sting only by instinct. Humans use their logic which is what makes them a much more dangerous species than all others. We commit murders every single day; it's not difficult to commit a murder. It's as simple as killing a bee. Should I really be afraid of bees? What do you think?